

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Springfield Academy
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

Team Members: Valerie Johnson, Chris Sargent, Education Specialists

Dates of On Site Visit: April 25, 2006

Date of Report: June 13, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
--

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

1. Student progress data
2. Surveys

3. Comprehensive plan
4. Comprehensive system of personnel development plan
5. District annual needs assessment
6. Teacher Assistance Team (TAT): referral vs. non referral information
7. Needs assessment information (such as personnel, facilities, etc)
8. Personnel training
9. Student files

Promising Practice:

The steering committee concluded Springfield Academy provides inservice training for their staff over and above the requirements. All teachers receive at least 52 hours of inservice training yearly.

Springfield Academy's teachers have weekly meetings to discuss concerns regarding students' success in the regular classroom. Modifications and accommodations that are implemented in the classroom are discussed at this time. Springfield Academy staff encourages the active involvement of administration and educational staff from each student's home school district.

The steering committee concluded Springfield Academy has a promising practice in the collecting and using for data-driven decision making. STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments are given to all students upon entry and 3 times a year to informally assess academic achievement and progress. Springfield Academy staff reviews SAT 10 results to determine progress toward the state's performance goals and indicators. Results are discussed at a teachers meeting and ideas to increase students with disabilities progress toward performance goals and indicators are generated.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee concluded that although Springfield Academy has very few referrals due to many of the students having been identified prior to placement at the academy, that the academy meets the requirements for an effective pre-referral system and referral system. A TAT team assists students prior to referral.

Validation Results**Promising Practices**

The monitoring team validated the steering committee's findings concerning the teacher training. During interviews, the teachers identified trainings which focus on increasing the student's confidence, dealing with problem behaviors and effective classroom management.

The monitoring team validated the steering committee's conclusions that using STAR Math and STAR Reading assessments to determine student's strengths and weaknesses is a promising practice. Providing weekly time for teachers to plan for students increases the effectiveness of this assessment and student planning.

The monitoring team identified the WALL OF FAME as a promising practice identifying social and academic achievements of students. This practice involves recognizing individual students as well as groups of students. Each month the students are identified on a bulletin board and recognized during an awards ceremony.

The monitoring team identified Springfield Academy's work related programs for home construction and the Bison Enterprises screening and matting business on campus as a promising practice. Students are recommended for placement in these programs by their team leader. Their application is reviewed by a team which considers the students behavior, level of safety and level of security. The students selected for the home construction program are involved in the construction of a home from beginning to end.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee's findings.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

1. Student progress data
2. Personnel development information
3. Number of referrals that do not result in evaluation
4. District records of release to outside agencies
5. Needs assessment information
6. Personnel training

Promising Practices

Springfield Academy has school twelve months out of the year with a 252 day calendar. This provides an opportunity for the students to increase their knowledge and skills, and reduces regression of skills.

Springfield Academy is an alternative setting. Due to behavior issues that lead to placement at Springfield Academy, a comprehensive behavior plan is implemented for all students.

If a child with a disability is placed at Springfield Academy:

- *the child is able to continue to progress in the regular curriculum,
- *the child continues to receive special education services as described in the child's IEP; and
- *the child receives services and modifications to address the behavior that resulted in the placement.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee determined Springfield Academy meets this requirement. Springfield Academy provides a free appropriate public education to all students. Due to the extensive services provided on-site and the fact that Springfield Academy is not a public school district, none of the students have been placed outside of the Academy.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The monitoring team was unable to validate the promising practices as these activities are part of the program within Springfield Academy and the provision of services is required by law.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee's findings.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

1. Teacher file reviews
 - Prior notice
 - Telephone log
 - Evaluation report
2. Exit and re-entry into special education
3. Number of placement committee overrides
4. Surveys
5. General curriculum information
6. Comprehensive plan
7. Initial referral log
8. Needs assessment information
9. Personnel training
10. List of tests currently used in the district (date of publication)
11. List of out of district testing services used by the district
12. Personnel with designated certification

Promising Practices

The steering committee concluded Springfield Academy has a promising practice of appropriate written notice in an attempt to obtain consent (via mail and phone) before assessments are administered to a child as part of an evaluation or reevaluation. In many instances, more than 3 attempts have been made to obtain parental permission.

When students are placed at Springfield Academy and their MDT/reevaluations have expired, the student is reevaluated and a team determines if there is a need for special education services.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee determined evaluation could be improved by listing the evaluations and evaluators on consent and prior notice forms after the team (including the student's parent(s)) has determined the evaluations needed. The team feels more parental involvement would be an improvement, but acknowledges the difficulty of locating many of Springfield Academy student's parents.

Out of Compliance

The steering committee has determined that consent for evaluation was out of compliance based on a review of three of nine that were reviewed, specifically, tests that were indicated were not given. Information from three student files indicated that students were administered tests not listed on the prior notifications/consent form.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The review team was unable to validate the promising practices, as notification to parents and re-evaluation are requirements by law.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team was unable to validate the steering committee's findings. Evaluations will be moved to out of compliance.

Out of Compliance:

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee's findings.

ARSD 24:05:30:05. Content of notice

The notice must include the following: A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report that the district uses as a basis for the proposal or refusal.

Issue 1

In three of seven files reviewed, evaluations were carried forward from previous testing, without notifying the parent in the notice that this would be done.

ARSD 24:05:25:04:02. Determination of needed evaluation data

A team of individuals, including input from the student's parents, determines what evaluation data is needed to support eligibility and the child's special education needs.

Issue 2

Through interview and file reviews, the monitoring team found the staff does not consistently implement a procedure for documenting parental input. One hundred percent of the files reviewed did not have documentation of parent input into the evaluation.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards
--

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**Data sources used:**

1. Teacher file reviews
2. Surveys
3. Comprehensive plan
4. Parental rights document
5. Consent and prior notice forms
6. Needs assessment information
7. Public awareness information
8. Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) disclosure
9. Review of access logs
10. Personnel training

Promising Practices

When discussing graduation requirements, students and parents are informed that school districts have different requirements for graduation. If students enroll in a school district other than their resident district, they must meet that district's graduation requirements.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee has determined that these requirements have been met based on: the district ensures the rights of the child are protected by appointing a surrogate parent following the state procedures/guidelines. Procedural safeguards are provided to parents with every prior notice for a meeting.

Validation Results**Promising practices**

The monitoring team was unable to validate the promising practice as planning for reintegration and notifying parents of graduation requirements is a requirement by law.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee's findings.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary**Data sources used:**

1. Comprehensive plan
2. Teacher file reviews
3. Student progress data
4. Personnel development information
5. Needs assessment information
6. Personnel training

Promising Practices

Typically, all students attend their IEP meetings. Parents are informed they may participate over the phone at Springfield Academy's expense if they are unable to attend the IEP meeting. Prior notice includes information informing parents they may invite other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding their child, including related service personnel as appropriate. All students entering Springfield Academy with a current IEP have an addendum meeting. This helps all teachers to be aware of the needs of the child.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee determined Springfield Academy meets requirements. 17 of 17 IEPs reviewed for students 16 year old or older documented transition goals, services and/or activities needed by the student. These services link to the student's life planning outcomes, present levels of performance and transition

assessments. 23 of 23 IEPs reviewed consistently contained skill based, measurable, and observable annual goals.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee determined Springfield Academy needs improvement in the area of transition. Comprehensive transition tools need to be administered to students. Assessment results should include transition information.

Progress reports should be done more timely. Present levels of performance should be documented in a manner that is reader friendly, for example, using headers for strengths, weaknesses, how disability affects student progress and involvement in the regular classroom, parental input, etc.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring team was unable to validate the steering committee's findings as the promising practices identified are requirements.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee's findings concerning goals and objectives.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team was unable to validate the steering committee's findings concerning transition. This area will be moved to out of compliance.

The monitoring team was unable to validate the steering committee's findings for present levels of performance. This area will be moved to out of compliance.

Out of Compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program. Each student's individualized education program shall include: (3) A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the student, or on behalf of the student, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the student:

Issue 1

The monitoring team determined this area is out of compliance based on interviews and file reviews. Student's IEPs do not reflect the actual service provided. Students are listed as either receiving 0 hours or 6 hours a day of special education services and not the specific number of hours of service they need to be successful. The service description is not tailored to student needs.

ARSD 24:05:27:13.02. Transition services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, designed within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Issue 2

The monitoring team determined this area is out of compliance. In all of the files reviewed, the transition services documented did not reflect a coordinated set of activities based on evaluation data.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program

Each student's individualized education program shall include a statement of the student's present levels of educational performance.

Issue 3

The monitoring team determined that the present levels of performance were not linked to functional information gathered during the evaluation process. In all of the files reviewed, the student's strengths and weaknesses in all areas of transition and academic areas of need were not addressed through goals and objectives.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

1. File reviews
2. Parent, Student, General educator surveys
3. General curriculum information
4. Age at Placement
5. Needs assessment information
6. Personnel training

Meets Requirements

The steering committee determined all requirements in this area are met. Students are placed in the regular classroom with modifications. At Springfield Academy the modifications students receive, the intensive cognitive behavior program that is in place, the highly structured day, and one-on-one assistance from special education teachers makes this possible. The steering committee feels this is best practice.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee's findings.